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ABSTRACT

Designed for volunteers in Olympic College's Adult Education Volunteer Classroom Assistant Project, this handbook discusses volunteer tutors' roles, characteristics of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) students, suggested teaching techniques, tips for working with instructors, and college policies and regulations. The first section provides profiles of the types of people enrolled in ABE/ESL programs at Olympic College and offers statistics on the need for ABE/ESL instruction in the surrounding counties. The next section provides an overview of ABE education at the college and literacy efforts undertaken by other community groups. The need for volunteers to alleviate funding problems and excessively large classes is underscored prior to a discussion of the roles volunteers can play in the classroom (e.g., individual or small group tutoring, overseeing students in problem solving and special study, and conducting supervised group sessions or drill work) and outside the classroom (e.g., recruiting other volunteers, volunteering to tutor in students' homes, and voicing concerns to legislators). Next, a job description is provided for ABE/ESL classroom volunteers and the steps involved in program participation are outlined. Then, routine procedures are outlined for documenting time; keeping in touch with the teacher, other volunteers, and the volunteer coordinator; and using campus services. A list of classroom tips and 2 sample log sheets conclude the manual. (AYC)

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OLYMPIC COLLEGE
Serving Kitsap and Mason Counties

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Handbook for Volunteers
Adult Education Program

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JC 840 427

Equal Opportunity College

OLYMPIC COLLEGE
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS

This handbook was developed with funds provided by the Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction under a grant from Section 310 of the Adult Education Act.

C. Russell Koehler
Olympic College Advisory Committee
for Adult Education
Bremerton, WA 98310
May, 1984

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THE PEOPLE THIS

BOOKLET IS ABOUT

Dan Loomis is 24, married, and the father of a little boy of whom he is proud. He, his wife and son live with his parents in Bremerton. The $78.40 a week he earns as a part-time service station attendant is not enough for a home of their own.

Dan had problems in school as a youngster. He was small for his age and had trouble getting along with classmates, particularly after being left back a couple of times. By the time he reached the eighth grade, he was having real difficulties. He wanted to take the industrial arts class, but it seemed he would never reach the tenth grade, the earliest year it was available. By the time his parents learned he was skipping ninth grade classes regularly, it was too late. He'd barely made it through the eighth grade, and tests indicate he is at fifth grade level.

After working part-time as a janitor at the shipyard, Dan was laid off during a funding cut. He applied for many other jobs he thought he could do, but each time was turned down because of the lack of high school education. When his sweetheart became pregnant, they got married. The marriage is a happy one, but Dan needs a better job so he can support his family. A friend told him that Olympic College had free classes for high school completion, so Dan investigated and is now in an ABE class, learning to read and write better. He attends regularly and is doing well. He hopes to complete his high school equivalency and get a better job so he can afford the tuition for the auto mechanics program.

Pete Sears is 49, married and father of three. Pete dropped out of the sixth grade to help on the farm. His father didn't see much use in school learning, was glad to have Pete's help, and somehow, Pete never got back to school. Evaluations show he reads at the third grade level.

Pete's been married since he was 25, and living in a small house his father and brothers helped build on the family farm near a small town. In recent years, the farm income has dwindled and Pete had to work hauling timber--until in an accident he permanently injured his back. Now he cannot work at manual labor, but is too proud to accept welfare. He's opposed to his wife's working, but to make ends meet, she works cleaning homes.

Pete is frustrated and impatient with the elementary work in the ABE classes. He wants to get through it so he can qualify as a store clerk or bookkeeper. Unfortunately, there aren't many jobs available of this type, either, but Pete knows it's his only route for escaping inevitable welfare rolls. He and his wife don't have the money to move to another state where employment might be better.

Nguyen Luc is 44, married, with three children. Ten years ago, Nguyen and his brother Cao owned a small manufacturing company in Saigon. When the North Vietnamese took over, he was assigned to a re-education camp and spend three years there. When he was released, he found he had no business left, and his wife and children were living with relatives. Nguyen, his brother, and their families walked several hundred miles, living off the land, to reach another country. There, they lived two more years in a refugee camp until being sponsored into the United States by a Bremerton family.

After arriving, Nguyen was helped to find a tiny apartment and learn how to get around in this strange, cold country. Volunteer tutors from the church helped with some English, but it was difficult for Nguyen to even hear many of the strange English sounds--let alone imitate them. He received a government stipend during his first year in Bremerton, and made ends meet by doing odd jobs such as yard work, painting, and part-time janitorial work. Now the stipend is no longer available.

Nguyen has applied for many jobs, including janitorial work and work in companies similar to the one he used to own. He is frustrated because he cannot communicate his skills to potential employers. He also feels he "loses face" every time he is turned down for work. He keeps trying--he had even offered to work for nothing to learn a new job, but employers prefer someone who speaks English. His wife is in poor health and must stay home to care for their one year old baby. Nguyen is desperate to learn English so he can get a job.

Mary Jones is 26 and has a child aged eight. She has lived here since arriving with her mother from a small Colorado town 13 years ago. She was in the fifth grade then, and doing second grade work. This was a strange place to her, and school was threatening and difficult--so her mother let her stay home. Later, Mary learned to enjoy the street life and never did get back to school. When she was 17, she married, and she and her husband moved in with her mother. A baby was born a year later, then Mary discovered she'd have to work to support both husband and baby. So, she told her husband to leave.

Now Mary is working as a night dishwasher in a cafe and leaves her daughter with grandma while she works. She has a good boss, who says he'll give her a job as a cashier if she can learn to read, write, and do arithmetic. She'd like to earn enough to move away from the downtown area before her daughter is old enough to start roaming the streets. So she's coming to adult reading classes, hoping to improve her education so her daughter will have a better life.

The people described on the previous two pages are not fictitious. The names were changed, but they are people who came to Olympic College to learn to read, write, and communicate in English. They are very representative of a large proportion of our population. These people are all in a trap--they want to work at better jobs, but can't get them because of a lack of education. They are often unable to read well enough to learn of job openings and unable to write well enough to complete a job application form. Many receive some form of welfare, but none likes it. They all know they would live better with an education, and be paying members of society.

THE VIETNAMESE GENTLEMAN DESCRIBED ABOVE TOLD HIS TEACHER ONE DAY THAT HE HAD KEPT A RECORD OF EVERY PRIVATE DONATION AND PUBLIC PAYMENT RECEIVED SO THAT, ONE DAY, WHEN HE HAD A JOB, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO PAY IT ALL BACK!

About 23,000,000 adults in America are in circumstances similar to the people described. These people have difficulty with simple activities the rest of us do every day:

--reading recipes, supermarket package labels, prescriptions, newspaper help wanted ads, warning labels and cautions, ferry schedules, traffic directions, and do-it-yourself instructions.

--helping their children with schoolwork.

--filling out forms and applications.

--seeking jobs or job training.

IN WASHINGTON: one of every ten adults has less than an eighth grade education.

IN KITSAP COUNTY: one fifth of adults did not graduate from high school.

IN MASON COUNTY: nearly three of ten adults did not graduate from high school.

IN AND NEAR BREMERTON: are numerous people who are non-English-speakers, particularly Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants from communist-controlled countries in Europe and the third world.

ADULT EDUCATION

AT OLYMPIC COLLEGE

Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes at Olympic College are for students least educated and needing instruction in the functional competencies of reading, writing and spelling, mathematics, and speaking English in order to improve self-esteem and become functionally self-supporting citizens.

THE GOAL OF THE ABE PROGRAM AT OLYMPIC COLLEGE IS TO REDUCE THE FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY RATE OF KITSAP/MASON COUNTIES.

What Goes on Here?

Olympic College offers tuition-free classes to all wishing to enroll at the Bremerton Campus and at extension locations in North Kitsap, South Kitsap, and Mason Counties. Classes are:

1. Functional reading, writing, and arithmetic for adults at beginning and advanced elementary levels.
2. High school completion (GED) for adults who are beyond the elementary level, but didn't graduate from high school.
3. English-as-a-Second-Language classes, both for beginners and advanced students.
4. U.S. customs for the foreign born.
5. Citizenship preparation for immigrants to the U.S.
6. Functional parenting.

Instruction takes place throughout the year (though it is limited to the Bremerton Campus during the summer quarter). Since many ABE and ESL students cannot read registration instructions, they may "appear" for the first time at any time during a term--when they learn of the program. Classroom instructors usually help them with the registration process as "walk-ins".

Classes take place during both day and evening times; a typical evening class will meet for two to two-and-a-half hours, two evenings a week.

The number of students in a typical adult class is large--often as many as thirty and seldom fewer than fifteen. Within a class, instructors meet with walk-ins and assist them in completing the registration. Students are also assessed to determine which class would be most beneficial and to have a "starting-point" record.

As teaching progresses, students are given frequent progress checks (not tests, if you please), but never "graded". Checks of progress--and post-assessments at end of courses--are used to record results of the program and to advise students of next steps to take.

What Goes on Elsewhere?

A great deal of less formal adult basic education takes place in Kitsap and Mason Counties. Some is coordinated by various agencies. Nearly all of this community education is conducted by volunteers who work as tutors with individuals to teach basic literacy, functional mathematics, functional English-speaking, and job-seeking skills (as examples). Much of the tutoring takes place in homes of volunteers and learners, in church meeting rooms, and in "borrowed" rooms in libraries and elementary schools.

Many of the volunteer workers learned of the need for their services through organizations to which they belonged, or through church groups. At the present time several groups, in particular the Kitsap Literacy Council (a chapter of the National Laubach Literacy Society), and the Family Service Center at Naval Submarine Base Bangor, are particularly active in coordinating networks of volunteer tutors and learners.

The Literacy Council estimates that close to two hundred volunteers are active under its auspices in Kitsap County. Additional estimates indicate as many or more individual tutors are working independently of any agency in Kitsap County.

Often tutors begin working with a functionally illiterate student and are able to raise the student's abilities or confidence to a point enabling better success in a class at Olympic College. The student then enters a class, and the volunteer tutor begins work with a new student.

A GOAL OF THE OLYMPIC COLLEGE ADULT EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS TO IMPROVE THE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE VOLUNTEER NETWORK AND THE COLLEGE.

VOLUNTEERS--

WHY THEY'RE NEEDED

ABE/ESL Funding

Tuition is free for Olympic College ABE and ESL classes--the students do not have to pay to attend. Most of them are poor and could not afford the regular college tuition even though they need the education badly. (Five hours of instruction per week for a ten week regular college class costs over $200 per student to deliver).

ABE/ESL students don't pay tuition, but teachers must be paid, and school overhead must be paid; so where do the funds come from? Money is appropriated from the U.S. Treasury under the Adult Education Act--and the State of Washington adds to it.

Sounds good, but there's a problem. There is always a high demand for adult education classes and, historically, there has never been enough money appropriated and available to pay for enough classes to meet the demand--or even advertise what's offered.

The result....

> few teachers, large classes and, often, waiting lists of people wanting to enter classes,
>
> and
>
> a lot of people who need basic skills education who haven't even heard about its offering.

The payoff, of course, is that those adults who progress from functional illiteracy to functional competency earn incomes and return far more in taxes paid to the treasury than it cost to educate them.

The Bottom Line
(In the Classroom)

With large classes, teachers are often faced with very diverse groups of students. An ESL teacher might see students ranging from "yesterday's arrival" from Central America who speaks not a word of English to a "yearling" from Hungary at an advanced English level. ABE students might range from one who can't spell his name to one who can read at sixth to eighth grade level. Students may arrive at any time during a term. The diversity among students places a real strain on the planning and conduct of classroom learning.

What Can Volunteers Do?

Volunteers can help classroom teachers with the learning process in the classroom and with classroom administration. With the wide range of educational levels and abilities present among ABE/ESL students, often many of the students are ahead of or behind the teacher-student mainstream of activity. For example, a volunteer assistant can work individually with a new arrival in the classroom to help assess his/her abilities and educational level--while the teacher continues working on a lesson with other students. Alternately, a volunteer can tutor individuals or small groups or coach them through problem solving activities while the teacher works with other groups. Other volunteer activities might include supervising students on reading and writing assignments or talking with students on subjects in your own area of expertise--adding to the resources the teacher brings to the classroom. On the next couple of pages are lists of activites volunteers have already performed. No one volunteer does all of the duties, but each one acts in capacities within their abilities. ABE and ESL teachers, when surveyed, indicated a real need for volunteer help in all of the following ways:

a. acting as individual or small group tutors/coaches,

b. overseeing students in problem solving, special study, and progress checks,

c. adding resources the teachers don't have,

d. conducting supervised group sessions on special topics,

e. conducting supervised drill and conversation,

f. helping to group students, and

g. aiding in student confidence and self-esteem building.

When asked who could or should be a volunteer, not one teacher asked for a subject matter or teaching expert. They wanted people with:

COMMITMENT

ENTHUSIASM

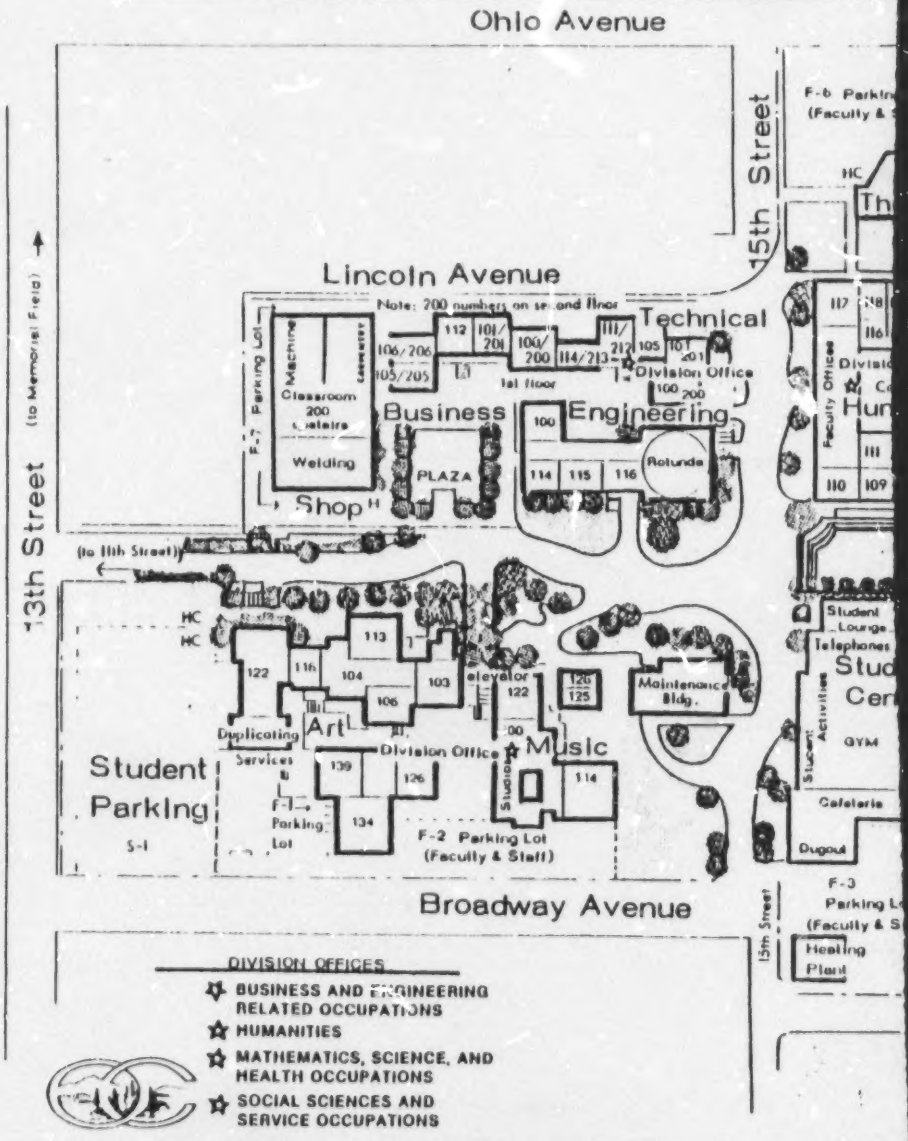
COMPASSION

RELIABILITY

FLEXIBILITY

WARMTH

and above all, PATIENCE!!



OLYMPIC COLLEGE Campus

BREMERTON, W

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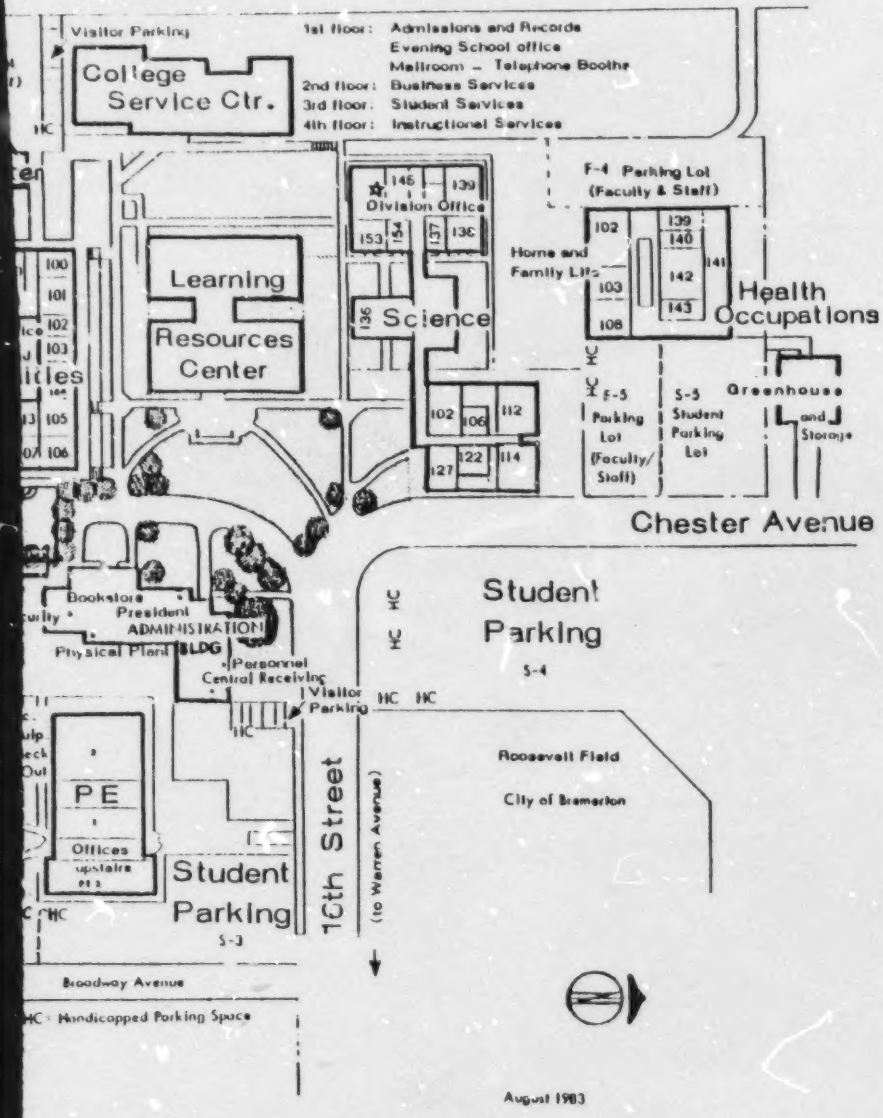

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OTHER WAYS VOLUNTEERS HELP

Volunteer assistance is helpful outside the classroom in:

--telling other possible volunteers about the need for help.

--contacting the Literacy Council, churches, and other groups to learn more about what they do.

--volunteering to tutor in your home or a student's home.

--sharing your concern about funding ABE programs with local legislators.

--talking to members of your organization and to workers at your job about the needs for basic skills training.

--referring potential students and potential volunteers to Olympic College.

OLYMPIC COLLEGE

ABE/ESL Classroom Volunteer Job Description

Assists ABE and/or ESL teacher during scheduled class hours and at other times outside the classroom by tutoring or coaching individual students or small groups of students:

1. coaches or tutors individuals or small groups to provide reinforcement of learning, review or subject enrichment;

2. corrects student work;

3. helps students practice reading, spelling, writing, making speech sounds, and solving arithmetic problems;

4. administers placement evaluations, formative and summative examinations, and followup examinations;

5. develops and uses lesson materials such as handout and overhead masters, flash cards and charts;

6. assists instructor in arranging and conducting field trips and inviting outside resource persons to class;

7. assists students in borrowing and returning materials;

8. advises classroom instructor of students with difficulties;

9. supervises student completion of individual assignments such as reading, writing and problem-solving activities.

May attend faculty meetings with supervising teacher, assist students with out-of-class difficulties or refer students to social agencies to remediate difficulties.

Works two to six hours per week on a regular basis with a teacher.

Must be 18 years of age or older, speak, read and write English fluently and conversationally, be responsive to the needs of disadvantaged, undereducated, and/or non-native-English-speaking adult students. Desirable to have some experience in working with undereducated or disadvantaged adults, some college education.

WHAT HAPPENS

WHEN YOU VOLUNTEER

Initial Contact: When someone discovers your interest, you'll be asked to contact the Olympic College ABE/ESL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM COORDINATOR: 478-4839.

Application: You'll be asked to drop in and complete a Volunteer Program Application and Release Form.

Interview: You will also meet with the volunteer program coordinator to discuss your interest and aptitude for this special kind of volunteer work and to identify classes and times in which you will best fit.

Orientation: You'll be scheduled to attend a volunteer orientation meeting during a late afternoon or early evening time. It will last about three hours, and you'll meet other volunteers and ABE/ESL teachers. The other volunteers will share their experiences, and the teachers will discuss some ways they work with students and how volunteers have helped.

Assignment: At the end of the meeting, a classroom and teacher assignment will be made for you based on the results of your interview, your available hours, and the kind of duties with which you feel most comfortable.

Commitment: You'll be asked to make a minimum commitment of at least two hours per week--and preferably of four to five hours per week--at a regular time.

Starting Out: You'll start with a teacher in a class. This teacher will be someone who has expressed a strong need for a volunteer worker. You'll meet together in advance of the first class meeting to coordinate duties. You'll be doing some of the things listed in the Volunteer Job Description--but probably not all of them. The duties you perform will be those that you and the teacher agree you will be comfortable with.

Rewards: If you're like most of our volunteers, you will FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF BECAUSE YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE FOR THE BETTER.

THE ROUTINE

Document Your Time

You are asked to keep a log of the time you spend--a sample sheet is included in this handbook. Keep the log as a handscribed diary by making one-line entries of any time you spend as a volunteer--and how you spend it. The purpose of this isn't to check up on you. For State reporting purposes it is necessary to document the number of hours volunteers contribute to adult education programs. Consequently, please keep a log and once a month, turn it in to the Volunteer Program Coordinator--either bring it to the office, or drop it in the Coordinator's College mailbox.

Keep in Touch

To start with, swap names and numbers with the classroom teacher and any other volunteers with whom you're working. Set a regular schedule (for example, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5-7 p.m.) for yourself. Be dependable. Once you get going, you and the teacher will be planning activities for students in advance. It can be awkward if you're not there at a time you were scheduled to be. If you can't make a scheduled meeting for some reason, please contact the teacher as soon as you know--or call the volunteer coordinator and leave a message for the teacher.

You may discover that the students should also have your name and number. Often students get into difficulty and can't get to class. Many of them want someone to know what's happened, and if they can't reach the teacher, they would like to reach you with a message.

Occasionally it happens that a teacher is sick. It is especially difficult when the students are adult basic education students, because often these students come to depend much more on teachers than do regular college students. When a volunteer has been available, teacher illness has presented a much smaller problem. The volunteer has been able to explain why the class was being dismissed and make the students feel less "abandoned".

Visits by Coordinator

The volunteer program coordinator will occasionally call you and probably visit the classroom where you are assigned. Again, the purpose is to make sure everything is going well and there are no difficulties--not to "check up" on you.

Parking

Volunteers are asked to park in any of the student parking lots during daytime visits. No special decal or pass is required. After 4:30 p.m., park in any designated space of a student, faculty or staff parking area on a first come, first park basis. Parking off campus on city streets is subject to Bremerton city parking regulations.

Coffee and Food Services

The campus cafeteria is available for beverages, snacks, and meals from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in public areas of all campus buildings, particularly classrooms, by State Regulations.

Telephones

Pay phones are located at the College Service Center and the Student Lounge.

Student Lounge

The Student Lounge is open from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, and from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday. Refreshments are available from vending machines.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items are taken to the Campus Security Office (behind the bookstore) or to the Evening Program Office in the College Service Center.

Safety and Security

Please turn off lights if you are the last person to leave a classroom at night. For any problems which you feel need someone's attention, suspicious incidents or vandalism, contact the campus safety and security office: 478-4654, or the Evening Program Office: 478-4506.

In case of fire or accident with injury, dial 911.
(or 9-911 from campus office phone).

Ethics and Confidentiality

You may become party to personal information about students or their academic progress or deficiencies. Under no circumstances should such information be shared with anyone other than the classroom teacher.

Who's in Charge?

Key people you may need to contact at times are:

Dr. Robert Evans, Dean of Instruction	478-4571
Duane Carlton, Associate Dean of Instruction	478-4545
Dr William Simpson, Director of Continuing Education, Extensions and Community Services	478-4839
Dr. Carl Ellis, Coordinator, Outreach Services	478-4804
Betty O'Guin, Program Assistant, Adult and Continuing Education	478-4839
Joan Dederick, Program Assistant, Mason County Extension Center	426-8441

WORKING WITH

ADULT STUDENTS

What You'll Bring

You the volunteer, but not the trained teacher, may be curious about what you can provide to students in ABE and ESL classes. There are many things. Remember, ABE students have little or no formal schooling or education. Their knowledge of the working world has often been limited to filling unskilled jobs or the distorted picture available from commercial television. ESL students often hear little spoken English during the course of a day and, especially for those recent arrivals in the U.S., often have little knowledge of our customs.

The teacher, when constrained to deal with large groups of students, is often limited as to how much of these kinds of supplemental information can be provided. You will provide an added resource for the classroom just by being there. You have a lot of special knowledge--about the world of work, shopping, travel, sports, recreation, community resources, gardening, homemaking, cooking and nutrition, banks and money, raising and caring for children. All of these subjects, and others involving daily life, are subjects about which ESL and ABE students may have little or no education or knowledge--because of their inability to read. If nothing else, you have the ability to converse in standard English with your own special flavor--something any ESL student can benefit from.

So do not feel limited in your ability to help in class. Just remember . . . .

The Students Are People

They are individuals. Though the ABE students have been limited in their education by some disadvantage, they can't be categorized as unintelligent. Each of them brings a unique personality to class. Every one of them knows the value of an education, wants it, and is motivated to get it--or the student wouldn't be in class. Further, ESL students may well be better educated than you or the teacher--in their native country--and be only in need of learning our language and customs to become fully functional citizens.

Classroom Tips

DO RESPECT STUDENTS AS PEOPLE WITH CONCERNS AND NEEDS.

DO TREAT EACH STUDENT AS AN INDIVIDUAL ADULT.

DO CONVERSE NORMALLY WITH STUDENTS. (They're usually missing an education, not ears.)

DO REMEMBER THAT MANY OF THEM ARE POOR, BUT HAVE PRIDE.

DO BE PATIENT. Many of the students will not do well in verbal communication because of a limited vocabulary.

DO PAY ATTENTION. The students often rely heavily on non-verbal communication--gestures and facial expressions--to get the message across.

DO BE UNDERSTANDING, BUT ASSERTIVE. Poorly educated adults often distrust authority--though respecting it.

DO BE FLEXIBLE. Adult education students, often poor, frequently have real difficulties in meeting regularly (transportation, health, child care, and other problems interfere).

DO BE ENTHUSIASTIC. A smile, a small success you show a student--these go a long way toward overcoming prior failure or frustration with the educational environment.

DO BE RELIABLE. Students will often come to depend on your classroom presence. When you're not there, they wonder why. (Did you forget them? Did they do something wrong?)

DON'T BREAK PROMISES TO STUDENTS. AND DON'T MAKE PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP. A small problem for you can be a personal disaster for an insecure student.

DON'T USE THE WORD 'TEST' IN ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES. When you were in school, you may have felt concern over testing. For many of the adult education students, the idea of tests brings back memories of frustration, failure, and fear. Incoming adult students are assessed (often informally) to determine class placement, given progress checks as they go along, and are never given grades. In fact, normal curves (those old "bell curves") and grades do not belong in adult basic education or ESL education. Any given student may exit from a program educationally better than before--yet at a different "level" than another student.

Olympic College
ABE/ESL Classroom Volunteer Activities Log

Dates	Description of Activities	Number of Hours

Volunteer's Name: _____

Olympic College
ABE/ESL Classroom Volunteer Activities Log

Dates	Description of Activities	Number of Hours

Volunteer's Name: _____

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